



DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY
Federal Energy Regulatory Commission

[Project No. 5124-022]

Washington Electric Cooperative, Inc.; Notice of Intent to Prepare an Environmental Assessment

On October 30, 2020, Washington Electric Cooperative, Inc. filed an application for a subsequent minor license to continue operating the existing 933-kilowatt North Branch No. 3 Hydroelectric Project No. 5124 (North Branch 3 Project or project). The project is located on the North Branch Winooski River in Washington County, Vermont. The project does not occupy federal land.

In accordance with the Commission's regulations, on January 28, 2021, Commission staff issued a notice that the project was ready for environmental analysis (REA notice). Based on the information in the record, including comments filed on the REA notice, staff does not anticipate that licensing the project would constitute a major federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment. Therefore, staff intends to prepare a draft and final Environmental Assessment (EA) on the application to license the North Branch 3 Project.

The EA will be issued and circulated for review by all interested parties. All comments filed on the EA will be analyzed by staff and considered in the Commission's final licensing decision.

The application will be processed according to the following schedule. Revisions to the schedule may be made as appropriate.

MILESTONE	TARGET DATE
Commission issues Draft EA	October 2021
Comments on Draft EA	November 2021
Commission issues Final EA	April 2022 ¹

Any questions regarding this notice may be directed to Michael Tust at (202) 502-6522 or michael.tust@ferc.gov.

DATED: April 12, 2021

¹ The Council on Environmental Quality's (CEQ) regulations under 40 CFR 1501.10(b)(1) require that EAs be completed within 1 year of the federal action agency's decision to prepare an EA. This notice establishes the Commission's intent to prepare an EA for the North Branch 3 Project. Therefore, in accordance with CEQ's regulations, the Final EA must be issued within 1 year of the issuance date of this notice.

Kimberly D. Bose,
Secretary.

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